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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
6 June 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 11:00 A.M. EDT)

Government Reorganization

1. As scheduled, 10 civilians were invited to participate as members of the Directorate today. The press reports that the Armed Forces Congress met today and approved the 10 invitations. The Embassy Saigon reported by telephone that the enlarged Directorate held its first meeting at 4:30 p.m. today (Vietnam time). There are no reports indicating whether all the invitees have accepted the new positions.

2. Among the 10 invitees, according to a press account, are at least two "notable" individuals." Tran Van Do, the GVN Foreign Minister who is a Buddhist, and Tran Van An, the chairman of the Election Law Drafting Committee who is a Cao Dai. The other Buddhist candidate is Dr. Pham Huu Chuong, who reportedly leans toward Tam Chau's moderate position. Of the remaining candidates, two are Catholics, two are Cao Dai, at least one is a Hoa Hao, one is from Hue, and one has no religious or political affiliation.

Buddhist Reaction

3. A communique issued this afternoon (Vietnam time), over the signature of Thich Thien Hoa, one of the Buddhist Institute's vice-chairmen, stated that the Armed Forces Council must withdraw Thieu and Ky from the Directorate and substitute two other generals. The "other" generals were not named and the communique did not formulate a plan of action

State Department review completed

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in the event Thieu and Ky are not removed. Ky and Thieu have no plans for the present to honor the Buddhist demands. Although Directorate chairman Thieu is expected to resign during the Armed Forces Congress meeting, the generals have specific plans to reelect him to the post.

Hue

4. Tri Quang was interviewed over the weekend by US journalists who reported him increasingly bitter over the lack of US support for the Buddhist struggle, especially in Da Nang. He is reportedly insistent that Ky and Thieu must go. Quang said he sent Tam Chau a telegram on 2 June to the effect that talks between the bonzes and the government would only be acceptable if Thieu and Ky agreed to resign immediately. Quang's position in the telegram was reportedly one of the reasons for Tam Chau's resignation. Quang repeated his lack of acceptance of the elections for the national assembly and said he was opposed to the Buddhists participating in it.

5. According to the press, hundreds of altars were placed in the streets of Hue today after an order was broadcast over a radio set up in Tri Quang's pagoda. A communique was reportedly circulated charging a US-GVN conspiracy aimed at "wiping out Buddhism." A letter protesting the government suppression of the struggle movement from the I Corps Buddhist chaplain to Buddhist soldiers was also distributed in leaflet form. The letter called on the soldiers to oppose the Thieu-Ky regime and again obey the instructions of the Buddhist Association.

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